

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for applying a topical anesthetic to an area of skin, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) incorporating an anesthetic in a lipophilic base into a volatile solvent to form a homogeneous solution;
- b) applying the homogeneous solution into the area of skin to be treated; and
- c) evaporating the volatile solvent from the homogeneous solution;

wherein the volatile solvent is present in the formulation in amounts between 40 - 80%.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein incorporating comprises dissolving the anesthetic in lipophilic base into a volatile solvent.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the anesthetic is lidocaine.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said volatile penetration enhancing agent is an alcohol.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said volatile penetration enhancing agent is selected from the group consisting of isopropyl alcohol and denatured ethyl alcohol.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein evaporating is carried out until less than 1 wt% of the volatile solvent remains in the solution.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein evaporating is carried out until less than 1 wt% of the volatile solvent remains in the solution.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the anesthetic further comprises a thickener and an emulsifier.

9. A method for applying a topical anesthetic to an area of skin, the method comprises the steps of:

a) mixing from about 40 - 80 % of alcohol with a mixture containing:

from about 20-40%, preferably about 20% lidocaine;

from about 0.5 to about 2.0%, preferably about 1.5% thickener;

from about 0.5 to about 2.0%, preferably about 1.5% emulsifier; and

the balance being a lipophilic base;

b) applying the homogeneous solution into the area of skin to be treated; and

c) evaporating the volatile solvent from the homogeneous solution;

wherein said topical anesthetic rapidly penetrates the skin surface at said skin.

10. A method of topically anesthetizing an area of the skin, the method comprising topically administering a formulation containing an effective amount of a topical anesthetic dissolved in an effective amount of a volatile penetration enhancer, wherein the volatile penetration enhancer evaporates from the skin; and wherein said topical anesthetic rapidly penetrates the skin surface at said skin leaving a cool sensation on the skin.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein said volatile penetration enhancing agent is an alcohol.

12. The method according to claim 10, wherein said volatile penetration enhancing agent is isopropyl alcohol.

13. A method of obtaining topical anesthesia in mammals by way of topical application, said method comprising administering a formulation comprising a mixture of lidocaine in a lipophilic base dissolved in 40 - 80% alcohol.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the anesthetic is a eutetic mixture of lidocaine and prilocaine.